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## INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

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<b>(21) International Application Number:</b> PCT/NL00/00110 <b>(22) International Filing Date:</b> 22 February 2000 (22.02.2000) <b>(30) Priority Data:</b> 1011383 24 February 1999 (24.02.1999) NL 1012936 30 August 1999 (30.08.1999) NL PCT/NL99/00380 18 June 1999 (18.06.1999) NL <b>(60) Parent Application or Grant</b> N.V. KEMA [/]; (). VAN LIERE, Jacobus [/]; (). VAN PAASSEN, Cornelis, Adrianus, Antonius [/]; (). VAN LIERE, Jacobus [/]; (). VAN PAASSEN, Cornelis, Adrianus, Antonius [/]; (). PRINS, Hendrik, Willem ; ().		<b>Published</b>
<b>(54) Title: COMBUSTION UNIT FOR COMBUSTING A LIQUID FUEL AND A POWER GENERATING SYSTEM COMPRISING SUCH COMBUSTION UNIT</b> <b>(54) Titre: UNITE DE COMBUSTION DESTINEE A LA COMBUSTION D'UN CARBURANT LIQUIDE ET SYSTEME DE PRODUCTION D'ENERGIE COMPRENANT CETTE UNITE DE COMBUSTION</b>		
<b>(57) Abstract</b> <p>The invention relates to a combustion unit for combusting a liquid fuel, comprising a fuel inlet, an air inlet and a flue gas outlet which are connected to a combustion chamber for combusting the fuel, wherein the fuel inlet is connected to at least one explosion atomizing unit which is disposed and adapted such that atomized fuel fragments due to gas formation in the atomized fuel, wherein the explosion atomizing unit is preferably an explosion swirl atomizing unit, and to a system for generating power, comprising at least one gas turbine, at least one compression device driven by the gas turbine and at least one such combustion unit.</p>		
<b>(57) Abrégé</b> <p>L'invention concerne une unité de combustion destinée à la combustion d'un carburant liquide, comprenant une admission de carburant, une admission d'air et une sortie de gaz de combustion lesquelles sont reliées à une chambre de combustion destinée à la combustion du carburant, l'admission de carburant est reliée à au moins une unité d'atomisation d'explosion laquelle est disposée et adaptée pour former des fragments de carburant atomisé par la formation de gaz dans le carburant atomisé, dans laquelle l'unité d'atomisation d'explosion est de préférence une unité d'atomisation d'explosion tourbillonnaire, ainsi qu'un système de production d'énergie comprenant au moins une turbine à gaz, au moins un dispositif de compression commandé par la turbine à gaz ainsi qu'au moins une unité de combustion précitée.</p>		

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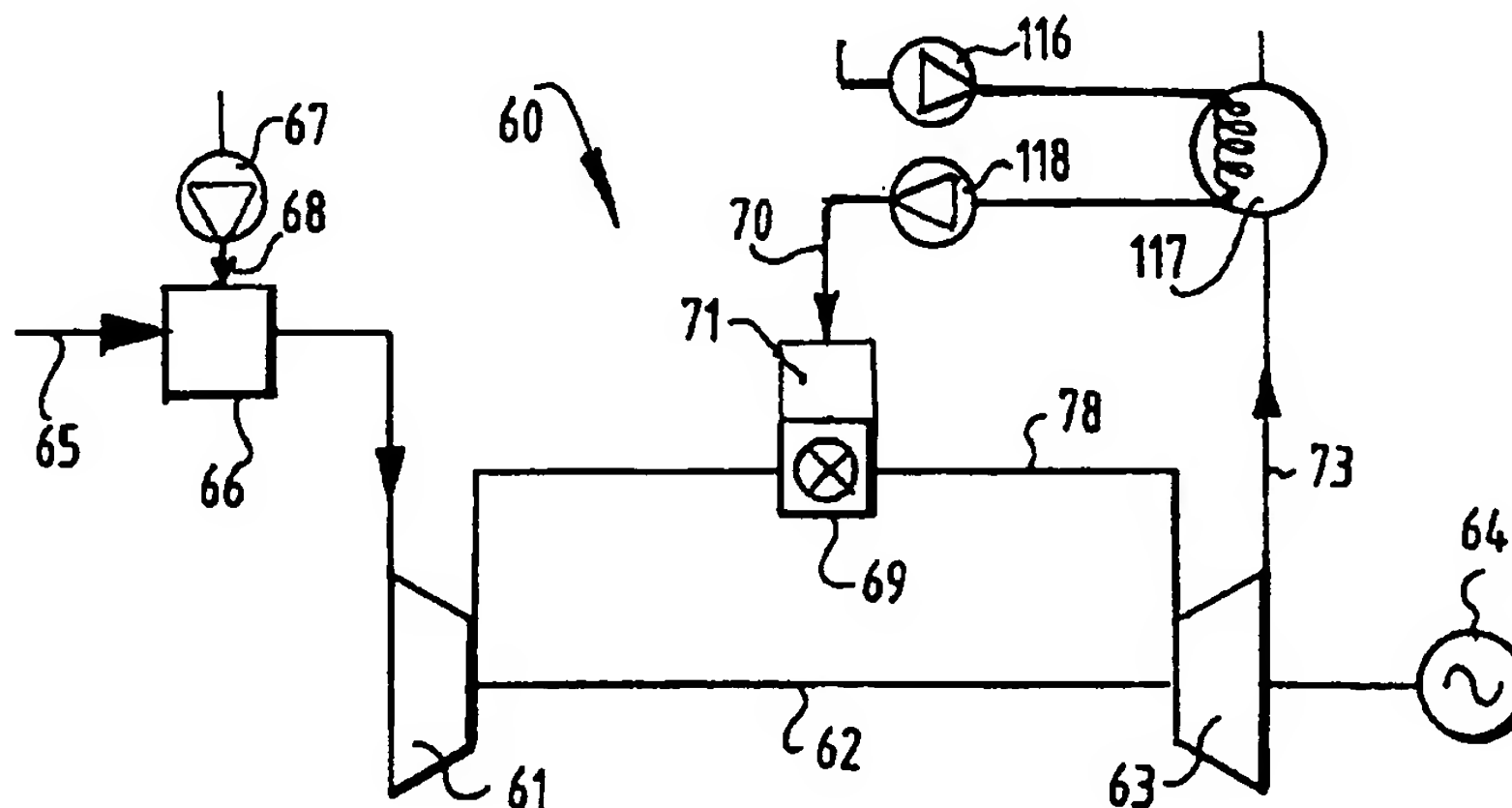
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<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/NL00/00110</p> <p>(22) International Filing Date: 22 February 2000 (22.02.00)</p> <p>(30) Priority Data:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1011383</td> <td>24 February 1999 (24.02.99)</td> <td>NL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PCT/NL99/00380</td> <td>18 June 1999 (18.06.99)</td> <td>NL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1012936</td> <td>30 August 1999 (30.08.99)</td> <td>NL</td> </tr> </table> <p>(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): N.V. KEMA [NL/NL]; Utrechtseweg 310, NL-6812 AR Arnhem (NL).</p> <p>(72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): VAN LIERE, Jacobus [NL/NL]; Bachlaan 86, NL-6865 ES Doorwerth (NL). VAN PAASSEN, Cornelis, Adrianus, Antonius [NL/NL]; Hooisekade 27, NL-2635 HB Den Hoom (NL).</p> <p>(74) Agent: PRINS, Hendrik, Willem; Arnold &amp; Siedsma, Sweel-inkplein 1, NL-2517 GK The Hague (NL).</p>	1011383	24 February 1999 (24.02.99)	NL	PCT/NL99/00380	18 June 1999 (18.06.99)	NL	1012936	30 August 1999 (30.08.99)	NL	<p>(81) Designated States: AE, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).</p> <p>Published With international search report. In English translation (filed in Dutch).</p>
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(54) Title: COMBUSTION UNIT FOR COMBUSTING A LIQUID FUEL AND A POWER GENERATING SYSTEM COMPRISING SUCH COMBUSTION UNIT



(57) Abstract

The invention relates to a combustion unit for combusting a liquid fuel, comprising a fuel inlet, an air inlet and a flue gas outlet which are connected to a combustion chamber for combusting the fuel, wherein the fuel inlet is connected to at least one explosion atomizing unit which is disposed and adapted such that atomized fuel fragments due to gas formation in the atomized fuel, wherein the explosion atomizing unit is preferably an explosion swirl atomizing unit, and to a system for generating power, comprising at least one gas turbine, at least one compression device driven by the gas turbine and at least one such combustion unit.

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**Description**

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COMBUSTION UNIT FOR COMBUSTING A LIQUID FUEL AND A POWER  
GENERATING SYSTEM COMPRISING SUCH COMBUSTION UNIT

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The present invention relates to a combustion unit for combusting a liquid fuel and to a system for generating power comprising such a combustion unit.

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In the combustion of liquid fuel, in particular engine fuels such as petrol, kerosine, diesel and methanol, it is important that at the time of the combustion the fuel is present in the smallest possible particles. The smaller the fuel particles, the more homogeneous a combustion results. A more homogeneous combustion is associated with less soot formation and soot emission as well as less CO formation and emission.

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It is therefore the object to introduce the smallest possible fuel droplets into the combustion chamber. Known combustion units are characterized by assorted additional means for obtaining the smallest possible fuel droplets in the combustion chamber at the moment of combustion.

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The present invention has for its object to provide a combustion unit for combusting liquid fuel which is provided with means for carrying into the combustion chamber very small liquid fuel particles (median size  $< 5 \mu\text{m}$ , generally  $< 3 \mu\text{m}$ , preferably  $< 2 \mu\text{m}$ , such as  $1.2 \mu\text{m}$ ). This while a sufficient supply of these very small liquid fuel particles can be ensured and the means for obtaining these very small liquid fuel particles have a relatively simple construction and can be added in relatively simple manner to existing combustion units.

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This is achieved according to the invention with a combustion unit for combusting a liquid fuel, comprising a fuel inlet, an air inlet and a flue gas outlet which are connected to a combustion chamber for combusting the fuel, wherein the fuel inlet is connected

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to at least one explosion atomizing unit which is disposed and adapted such that atomized fuel fragments due to gas formation in the atomized fuel.

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The means for realizing these very small liquid fuel particles consist of explosion atomizing units.

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All known types of atomizer can in principle be used in the explosion atomizing unit. Swirl atomizers, slot atomizers, hole atomizers, rotating plate or bowl atomizers and optionally pen atomizers are for instance suitable. All that is important is that the atomizer generates droplets or a film of liquid fuel to the gaseous medium under changed conditions such that explosion atomizing then occurs. Explosion atomizing entails the liquid fuel entering the combustion chamber under conditions such that as a result of the pressure drop over the atomizer boiling or gas bubbles occur in the droplets or film of the liquid fuel. That is, gas formation occurs in the liquid fuel. This so-called flashing or precipitation results in the droplets or film of fuel exploding or fragmenting due to the sudden partial boiling or gas precipitation. This fragmentation results in very small droplets of fuel being generated in the gaseous medium. The median dimension of fuel particles amounts after fragmentation to less than 5  $\mu\text{m}$ , generally less than 3  $\mu\text{m}$ , preferably less than 2  $\mu\text{m}$ , for instance 1.2  $\mu\text{m}$ .

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It is noted that the explosion atomizing unit does not have to deliver the atomized liquid fuel directly into the combustion chamber. It is sufficient that the generated fuel droplets finally enter the combustion chamber without an undesirably large droplet growth having taken place as a consequence of coalescence.

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The invention allows the use in the atomizing means of all types of atomizers insofar as these can result in particles with said median size after fragmentation. It is important in this respect that the explosion atomizing units are disposed and adapted such

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5           that the atomized fuel fragments through gas formation in  
the atomized fuel.

          Use is preferably made of an explosion swirl  
atomizing unit which is provided with swirl atomizers. In  
10       5 such a known swirl atomizer a swirling movement is  
imparted to the liquid fuel in a swirl chamber. The  
swirling fuel exits from an outlet opening. It has been  
found that the thickness of the exiting layer of fuel is  
15       a fraction (for instance 10%) of the diameter of the  
outlet passage. Due to the subsequent explosion  
10       fragmentation, particles are obtained (depending on the  
pressure drop, temperature and passage diameter) with a  
20       median dimension of 5  $\mu\text{m}$  or smaller.

          It will be apparent that in order to realize  
15       this fragmentation it is important that the conditions  
(and particularly change in conditions) under which the  
25       liquid fuel is atomized are optimal for fragmentation.  
Important conditions for flash-fragmentation are the  
temperature of the fuel, the atomizing pressure under  
20       which the fuel is atomized, the pressure drop during exit  
and the passage diameter. It is therefore recommended  
30       that the explosion atomizing unit comprises means for  
adjusting the temperature of the evaporating agent and/or  
the atomizing pressure.

35       25           In the case of retrofit of the above stated  
combustion unit, it is possible to integrate a  
configuration of a number of explosion atomizing units  
into a new or modified air inlet, or to have these  
40       explosion atomizing units debouch directly into the  
combustion chamber. By orienting the outlet passage of  
30       each explosion atomizing unit it is possible to atomize  
the fuel such that it is optimal for the forming of the  
mixture of fuel and air for combustion. Particularly  
45       recommended are swirl atomizers and slot or hole  
atomizers since these have a very simple construction,  
35       can be readily miniaturized and built into existing  
combustion units. Very large numbers of explosion  
50       atomizing units can thus be incorporated without too many



5 modifications of an existing combustion unit, which  
offers great freedom in the choice of fuel flow rate to  
the combustion chamber. Retrofit of existing combustion  
units thus results in combustion units which can be  
10 5 converted at lower cost and which nevertheless realize a  
greatly improved combustion with a lower soot and NO<sub>x</sub>  
emission.

As stated, liquid fuel can be applied as fuel.  
15 The liquid state herein refers to the state of the fuel  
10 at the temperature and pressure prevailing in the fuel  
inlet. This means that fuels can be used which are  
gaseous in ambient conditions. Fuels such as diesel and  
20 petrol have a boiling range. This means that in order to  
realize the explosion atomizing a temperature must be  
15 chosen from the boiling range such that a significant  
flash effect occurs. For diesel oil a temperature can be  
25 chosen of 350°C. For kerosine/petrol a lower fuel  
temperature can be chosen (250/150°C). A higher fuel  
temperature, such as 400°C, can be chosen for low-speed  
20 marine diesel engines. It is noted however that these  
30 temperatures can vary depending on the pressure applied  
and optional fuel additives which have a positive effect  
on the explosion atomizing. It will be apparent that in  
order to realize an optimal explosion atomizing a  
35 25 combustion unit will preferably be equipped with means  
for adjusting the temperature and the atomizing pressure  
of the fuel.

If in further preference the temperature-  
40 adjusting means adjust the temperature of the evaporating  
30 agent around or to the critical temperature, the  
evaporating agent acquires a surface tension of  
practically or equal to 0 N/m<sup>2</sup>. This means that no further  
45 or little atomizing energy is required to atomize the  
liquid, whereby the droplet size will become extremely  
35 small (a median droplet dimension to 0.1 μm is possible  
here) and the use of other agents to decrease the surface  
50 tension can optionally be dispensed with.

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In addition to said physical conditions for fragmentation, it is also possible to enhance fragmentation by chemical or physical additives to the fuel. It is therefore recommended to add agents to the fuel which reduce the surface tension of the fuel and thereby decrease the energy required for fragmentation. Detergents and the like can be used as surface tension-reducing agents. Preferred are those surface tension-reducing agents which do not remain only on the surface of the fuel droplet but which are distributed almost homogeneously through the fuel (droplet or film). It is thereby not required that, after atomizing and prior to fragmentation, the surface tension be reduced to a lesser extent as a result of diffusion. In these conditions it is recommended to use fatty acids, particularly shorter fatty acids and optionally alcohols such as methanol and ethanol. These latter agents are particularly recommended because of a relatively low boiling point and good combustion. Thus is avoided that the combustion process is affected in a negative sense by these additives.

According to another embodiment the fuel contains combustible and/or vaporizable substances which either reduce the surface tension of the fuel or enhance the gas formation in the fuel as a result of the pressure drop over the atomizer. Combustible and/or vaporizable substances can particularly be used here which have a boiling point lower than the boiling point of the fuel. This should be understood to mean that in the case of a boiling range of the fuel, and optionally of the evaporating agent, these ranges are chosen such that the evaporating agent makes an essential contribution to the gas formation and ultimately the fragmentation of the fuel. When a number or mixture of evaporating agents are used, the vaporizable substances with the lowest boiling point will suddenly evaporate first and form boiling bubbles due to the pressure drop when passing through the explosion atomizing unit, whereby liquid fuel explodes or fragments into small droplets. A mixture can for instance

5 be used of diesel oil as fuel and water as evaporating  
agent. Superheated evaporating agent (water) can also be  
used as evaporating agent (for instance water) and can be  
applied particularly in oil-fired boilers for generating  
10 5 steam. In which case fuel and superheated water can also  
be introduced separately into the boiler by explosion  
atomizing. The additional advantage is realized here that  
through the evaporation of the water the temperature of  
15 the mixture is lower prior to combustion, during  
10 combustion and after combustion, which enhances the  
performance of the combustion unit and reduces the  
emission of CO and NO<sub>x</sub>.

20 The combustion unit can be applied in a  
combustion engine, for instance a gas engine, petrol  
15 engine or diesel engine. In addition, the combustion unit  
can be incorporated in a system for generating power  
25 which comprises a compression device driven by a gas  
turbine and the combustion unit according to the  
invention in which fuel and air compressed by the  
20 compression device are combusted and fed to the gas  
30 turbine.

It will be apparent that it is very  
advantageous in this respect if explosion atomizing units  
are used in the compression device to atomize determined  
35 25 evaporating agents with a comparably higher evaporation  
energy (for instance water). A quasi-isothermal  
compression is hereby obtained whereby the compression  
work is reduced considerably. In the case the combustion  
40 unit is provided with a compression chamber and a  
30 combustion chamber, the explosion atomizing unit for the  
fuel can be connected to the combustion chamber and an  
explosion atomizing unit for evaporating agent for the  
45 purpose of evaporation cooling can be connected to the  
compression chamber.

35 During the compression stroke and the firing  
stroke of the combustion engine an optional quasi-  
50 isothermal compression, and in any case an optimal  
combustion, can thus take place. It is further

5 recommended in the case of evaporation cooling that  
between a compression chamber and a combustion chamber of  
the combustion engine at least one pressure vessel is  
received which is in heat-exchanging contact with a  
10 5 combustion gas outlet of the combustion engine. It is  
thus possible in the cool compressed air to recuperate  
heat from the heat of the flue gases. If the residence  
time in the pressure vessel is too short, a number of  
15 pressure vessels can be applied in parallel or a  
10 relatively large pressure vessel in combination with a  
number of combustion chambers.

20 Mentioned and other features of the combustion  
unit and the power-generating system according to the  
invention will be further elucidated hereinbelow with  
15 reference to a number of embodiments which are given by  
way of example without the invention having to be deemed  
25 limited thereto.

In the drawing:

figure 1 shows a schematic view of an explosion  
20 swirl atomizer;

30 figure 2 shows a schematic representation of a  
diesel engine according to the invention with turbo-  
charger;

35 figure 3 shows a variant of the diesel engine  
25 of figure 2;

figures 4-6 each show a schematic  
representation of a combustion engine according to the  
invention;

40 figure 7 shows a schematic representation of a  
30 power-generating system according to the invention;

45 figure 8 shows another power-generating system  
according to the invention according to the TOPHAT  
principle (TOP humidified air turbine); and

35 figure 9 shows another power-generating system  
according to the invention according to the TOPHACE  
principle (TOP humidified air combustion engine).

50 Figure 1 shows an explosion swirl atomizer 1  
such as is applied in a combustion unit according to the

invention. The explosion swirl atomizer 1 comprises a line 2 with which fuel 3 (and/or optional evaporating agent) is fed via a tangential opening 4 to a swirl chamber 5. The liquid acquires a swirling movement 6 in swirl chamber 5 and leaves atomizer 1 via an outlet opening (or passage). The swirling fuel exits in the form of a cone. The thickness of the layer of fuel herein decreases and as a consequence of fragmentation breaks up into very small droplets. It can clearly be seen that the thickness of the layer of fuel is smaller than the diameter of outlet opening 7 of swirl chamber 5 when the exiting liquid exhibits flashed or gas precipitation through sudden pressure decrease, the cone and the particles then fragment into extremely small droplets, the so-called explosion atomizing. The thickness of the cone layer and the size of the formed droplet depends on the degree of explosion atomizing, and thus on the degree of gas formation in the cone layer. The physical conditions which are important herefor are the pressure and the temperature of the fuel and the prevailing pressure and temperature in the space into which the swirling atomized fuel is delivered. It is thus possible to influence the number and size of the formed atomized fuel particles by the choice of these conditions.

Figure 2 shows a diesel engine 8 according to the invention comprising six combustion units or cylinders 9 according to the invention. Diesel oil is supplied via a pump 10 and a line 11 to an explosion atomizing unit 12 which can consist of a suitable number of chosen explosion atomizers as shown in figure 1. The diesel oil has a temperature and pressure suitable for the explosion atomizing. Air is supplied via a line 13 to a compressor 14 which is driven by a gas turbine 16 via a shaft 15.

Added to gas turbine 16 is the flue gas from cylinders 9 which is fed via a line 17 to gas turbine 16 and via a line 18 to the chimney 19.

5                   Air compressed in compressor 14 is fed via  
lines 20 to the combustion chamber 21 of each cylinder 9.

10                   Figure 3 shows a diesel engine 22 corresponding  
5                   with figure 2. Corresponding components are designated  
with the same reference numerals. A first difference  
15                   however is that the air compressed in compressor 14 is  
not fed via line 20 to combustion chamber 21 but to the  
explosion atomizing unit 12. This produces an optimum mix  
20                   of fuel and air. If the air still contains evaporating  
agent particles (water particles), a quasi-isothermal  
compression is still even possible in cylinder 9.

20                   Secondly, an explosion atomizing unit 23 is  
received in line 13. Through explosion atomizing water is  
supplied herein to the air, whereby a quasi-isothermal  
15                   evaporation occurs in compressor 14. The water required  
is fed via a line 24 to a heat exchanger 25 in which it  
25                   is in heat-exchanging contact with the flue gas leaving  
gas turbine 16. The heated water is fed under pressure  
via a pump 26 to explosion atomizing unit 23.

20                   Diesel engines 8 and 22 shown in figures 2 and  
30                   3 can be used as low-speed marine diesel engines.

35                   Figure 4 shows a combustion engine 27 according  
to the invention which is provided with a compression  
chamber 28 and a combustion chamber 29. Compression  
35                   chamber 28 is provided with an air inlet 30 with an inlet  
valve 31. Compression chamber 28 further comprises an  
explosion atomizing unit 32 for supplying coolant (for  
instance water) via line 33. Quasi-isothermal compression  
40                   can thus be achieved by evaporation cooling. Via an  
outlet 35 provided with a valve 34 the compression  
30                   chamber 28 is connected to a pressure vessel 36 which is  
provided with a heat exchanger 37. Pressure vessel 36 is  
45                   connected via line 38 and a valve 39 to combustion  
chamber 29, which is further provided with an explosion  
35                   atomizing unit 40 for fuel supplied via line 41 and an  
ignition unit 42. Via a valve 43 and an outlet 44 exhaust  
50                   gases are discharged via heat exchangers 45, 37 and 46.

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The operation of combustion engine 27 is as follows. At one bar and a temperature of 27°C water is atomized via explosion atomizing unit 32 in compression chamber 28, wherein quasi-isothermal compression takes place to 44 bar and 220°C. Valves 34 and 39 open and pressure vessel 36 and combustion chamber 29 are filled during the latter part of the stroke of piston 47. Valves 34 and 39 then close. The air present in pressure vessel 36 is heated against the exhaust gases passing through heat exchanger 37. In pressure vessel 36 the air is heated to a temperature of 300°C and finally flushed into combustion chamber 29 via valve 39.

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Fuel is injected simultaneously via explosion atomizing unit 40, whereafter ignition and expansion then take place in combustion chamber 29. During the return stroke of piston 48 the exhaust gases are discharged via valve 43 and used for heat exchange with the fuel, the compressed air and the water for injecting.

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It will be apparent that in combustion engine 29 fuel is likewise injected via explosion atomizing unit 40 and coolant via explosion atomizing unit 32.

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The use of combustion engine 27 achieves that minimal compression work is performed, while the recuperation of low temperature heat is realized for preheating of air, water and/or fuel.

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In the case the residence time in the pressure vessel is insufficient for an optimal heating of the compressed gas, it is recommended that the pressure vessel be embodied in the form of a number of pressure vessels connected in parallel between compression chamber 28 and combustion chamber 29.

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If the quasi-isothermal compression is performed by injecting a mixture of water/fuel (for instance water/ methanol), the evaporation cooling can then be supplemented by extraction of heat resulting from the cracking of the fuel. In order to perform this cracking reaction of the fuel it is necessary for a cracking catalyst to be incorporated in the pressure

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5 vessel (for instance CuO for methanol or zeolite for  
petrol). Important are an adequate reaction time in the  
order of one second and a sufficiently high cracking  
10 temperature for methanol of 250-300°C and for petrol of  
5 475-675°C.

It will be apparent that by arranging a  
separation between the compression chamber and the  
combustion/ expansion chamber using the pressure vessel,  
15 an optimization of the energy efficiency can be realized  
10 in conditions of variable power requirement by making use  
of the accumulated energy. A hybrid motor with compressed  
air storage can optionally even be applied.

20 Figure 5 shows a combustion unit 49 according  
to the invention.

15 Via the rotating compressor 50 air is supplied  
via inlet 51, while a water/fuel mixture is atomized with  
25 an explosion atomizing unit 52. Connected to pressure  
vessel 58 are combustion chambers 53 which each take in  
the compressed mixture of air/fuel via a line 54, while  
20 additional fuel is supplied via inlet 55. The mixture is  
30 ignited using ignition 56. Exhaust gases leave combustion  
chamber 53 via outlet 57. Using a heat exchanger 59 heat-  
exchange takes place with the mixture of air/fuel present  
in pressure vessel 58. By making use of the large  
35 pressure vessel 58 and a plurality of combustion chambers  
there is significantly more time for heating of the  
mixture present in pressure vessel 58 using the exhaust  
gases.

40 Figure 6 shows a combustion engine 60  
30 comprising a cylinder 61 with a piston 62 in addition to  
an air inlet 63 and a flue gas outlet 65. Cylinder 61 is  
further provided with plasma electrodes 66 which are  
45 connected to power electronics 68 for generating a plasma  
in the head of cylinder 61. During the compression a  
35 fuel/water mixture is fed via the explosion atomizing  
unit 69, not shown in detail, for the quasi-isothermal  
compression. The plasma arc is subsequently generated to  
50 heat the compressed air and the ignition of the fuel



5 mixture, and after the expansion stroke of piston 62 the  
flue gases are expelled via outlet 65 and drive the  
turbine 70 while generating power which is used partially  
by the power electronics.

10 5 Figure 7 shows a system 60 for generating  
power. System 60 comprises a compressor 61 which is  
driven via a shaft 62 by gas turbine 63 which in turn  
drives a generator 64.

15 Air is supplied to compressor 61 via a line 65  
10 and water is supplied in an explosion atomizing unit 66  
via the line 68 provided with a pump 67. The air  
compressed in compressor 61 is fed to a combustion unit  
20 69 according to the invention, to which via a line 70  
preheated fuel is supplied at pressure via pump 116, heat  
exchanger 117 and pump 118 and atomized in an explosion  
15 atomizing unit 71 before being fed to combustion unit 69.  
The fuel is brought to pressure with pump 116 and  
25 preheated via heat-exchange against the flue gas from  
line 73 in heat exchanger 117, and brought to or above  
20 the critical temperature or, in the case of a boiling  
range for the fuel, within the range of critical  
30 temperatures of the fuel components. Via line 72 flue gas  
is fed to turbine 63 and after expansion discharged via  
line 73.

35 25 Figure 8 shows another system 74 for generating  
power according to the invention in accordance with the  
so-called TOPHAT principle. In an explosion unit 75 air  
74 is provided with water droplets with water 77 supplied  
40 by means of explosion atomizing. The air is supplied to a  
30 compressor 78 which is connected via a shaft 79 to a gas  
turbine 80 which drives a generator 81. Evaporation  
cooling of the water droplets takes place in compressor  
45 78. The cool compressed air passes through a heat  
exchanger 83 via a line 82 and is fed to combustion unit  
35 84. Fuel is preheated at pre-pressure via pump 120 in  
heat exchanger 121 and brought under pressure by pump 122  
50 and after explosion atomizing in explosion atomizing unit  
93 supplied via line 85 to combustion unit 84. The added

5 fuel is at a pressure and temperature such that when it  
enters the combustion chamber of combustion unit 84 fuel-  
flash takes place, resulting in an extremely fine  
atomizing of the fuel. The flue gas from gas turbine 80  
10 passes through heat exchanger 83 via line 86 for heat-  
exchanging contact with the cool compressed air from  
compressor 78. Via line 87 the flue gas passes through a  
heat exchanger 88 and condenser 87 on its way to chimney  
15 92. In condenser 89 water is condensed out of the flue  
gas and guided under pressure via pump 90 through heat  
exchanger 88, whereafter the water 77 reaches explosion  
atomizing unit 75 under pressure and at temperature. The  
20 condensation water from condenser 89 can optionally be  
replenished with water via line 91.

15 Finally, figure 9 shows a system 94 according  
to the invention for generating power in accordance with  
the TOPHACE principle.

25 Via a pump 95 water (140-250°C, 150 bar) is fed  
to an explosion atomizing unit 96 to which air is  
20 likewise fed via line 97 (15°C). From the explosion  
atomizing unit 96 the air reaches a compressor 98 which  
30 operates at an efficiency of 0.8. The compressed air  
(140°C) is fed via line 99 to a heat exchanger 100 for  
heat-exchanging contact with the flue gases of a  
35 combustion engine 101. This latter comprises four  
cylinders 102, an air inlet 103 of which connects to line  
99 via a valve 104. A flue gas outlet 105 of each  
cylinder 102 passes through heat exchanger 100 and is  
40 carried via line 106 through a heat exchanger 107 and  
30 enters the chimney 92 via condenser 89. In condenser 89  
is formed condensation 108 which after passing through a  
water cleaner 109 is brought to pre-pressure with pump  
45 110 and fed via heat exchanger 107 to pump 95 and brought  
to pressure.

35 Fuel is fed to each cylinder 102 via pump 111,  
line 117 and explosion atomizing unit 112 and valves (not  
50 shown). The fuel is preheated to or beyond the critical  
temperature or, in the case of a boiling range, to within

5 the range of critical temperatures, before being atomized  
with explosion atomizing unit 112.

10 In the recuperator 100 the air is heated from  
140°C to 377°C, while the flue gas from cylinders 102 re-  
5 cools from 465°C to 210°C. The air is fed at a pressure  
of 9 bar to cylinders 102 and atomized fuel is injected.  
Cylinders 102 are also embodied with an igniter 119 for  
15 igniting the mixture in each cylinder 102. Cylinders 102  
are each equipped with a piston 113, which are connected  
10 to a shaft 114 which is connected via a 1:5 gear system  
115 to the shaft 114 of compressor 98 and on the other  
side to the generator 116.

20 Under ideal conditions the system 94 produces  
power of 226 kilowatts at an efficiency of 64%. A known  
15 apparatus according to the Atkinson principle produces a  
power of only 170 kilowatts at an efficiency of 48%.

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**Claims**

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## CLAIMS

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1. Combustion unit for combusting a liquid fuel, comprising a fuel inlet, an air inlet and a flue gas outlet which are connected to a combustion chamber for combusting the fuel, wherein the fuel inlet is

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5 connected to at least one explosion atomizing unit which is disposed and adapted such that atomized fuel fragments due to gas formation in the atomized fuel.

20

2. Combustion unit as claimed in claim 1, wherein

10 the explosion atomizing unit is an explosion swirl atomizing unit.

25

3. Combustion unit as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the explosion atomizing unit comprises means for adjusting the temperature of the fuel and/or the

15 atomizing pressure.

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4. Combustion unit as claimed in claim 3, wherein the temperature adjusting means are suitable for adjusting the temperature of the fuel below, at or above the critical temperature of the fuel.

20 5. Combustion unit as claimed in claims 1-4,

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wherein the fuel is provided with agents for reducing the surface tension of the fuel.

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6. Combustion unit as claimed in claim 5, wherein the surface tension-reducing agents contain  
25 combustible and/or vaporizable substances.

45

7. Combustion unit as claimed in claims 1-6, wherein the fuel is a mixture of fuel and an evaporating agent having a boiling point lower than the boiling point of the fuel.

30 8. Combustion unit as claimed in claim 7, wherein the evaporating agent is water.

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9. Combustion unit as claimed in claims 1-8, wherein the explosion atomizing unit is accommodated in

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5 the combustion chamber and optionally a compression  
chamber of the combustion unit.

10 10. Combustion unit as claimed in claim 9,  
wherein at least one pressure vessel in heat-exchanging  
5 contact with the flue gas outlet is arranged between the  
compression chamber and the combustion chamber.

15 11. Combustion unit as claimed in claim 10,  
wherein  
a catalyst for cracking fuel is arranged in the  
10 combustion chamber.

20 12. System for generating power, comprising at  
least one gas turbine, at least one compression device  
driven by the gas turbine and at least one combustion  
unit as claimed in claims 1-11.

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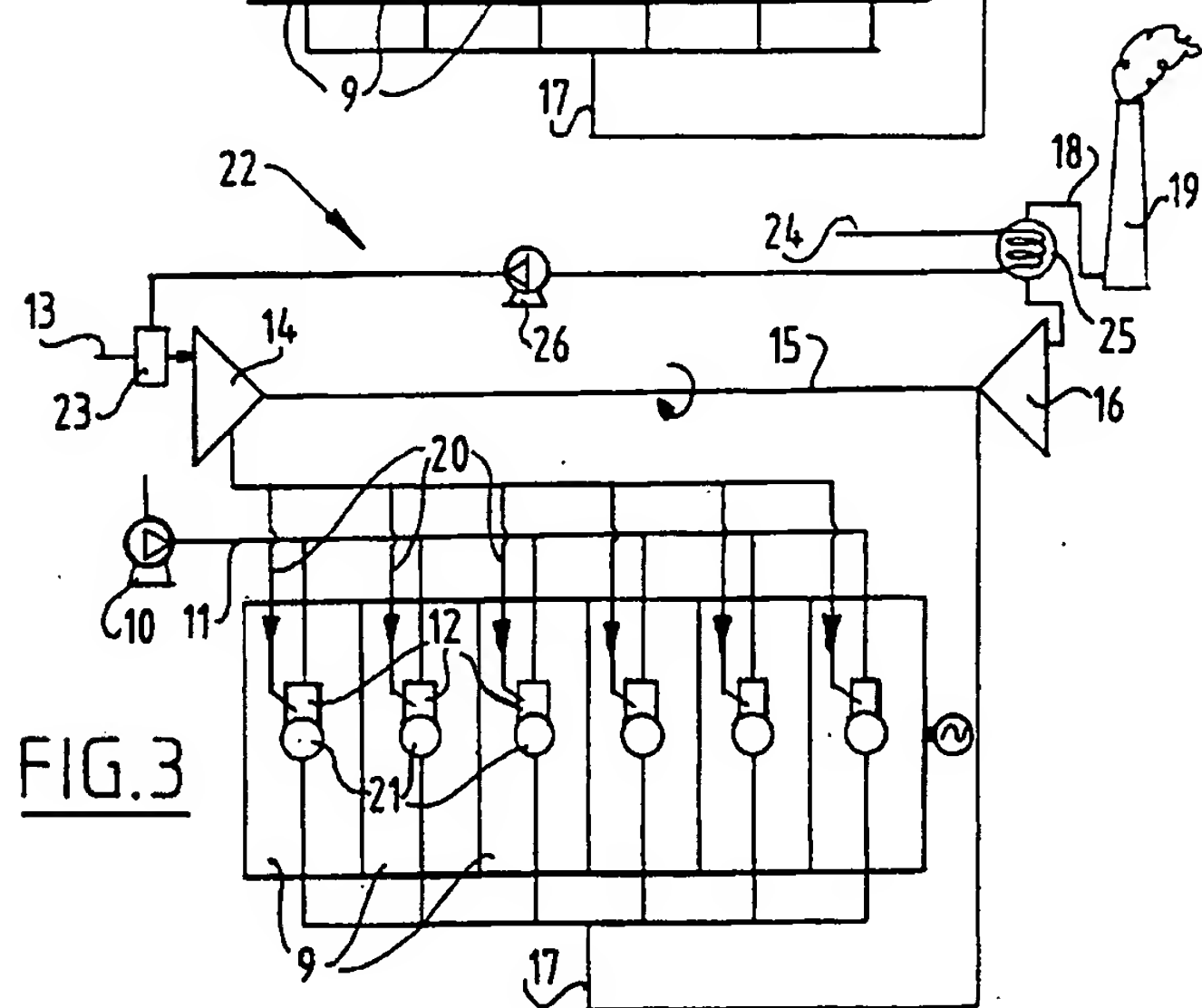
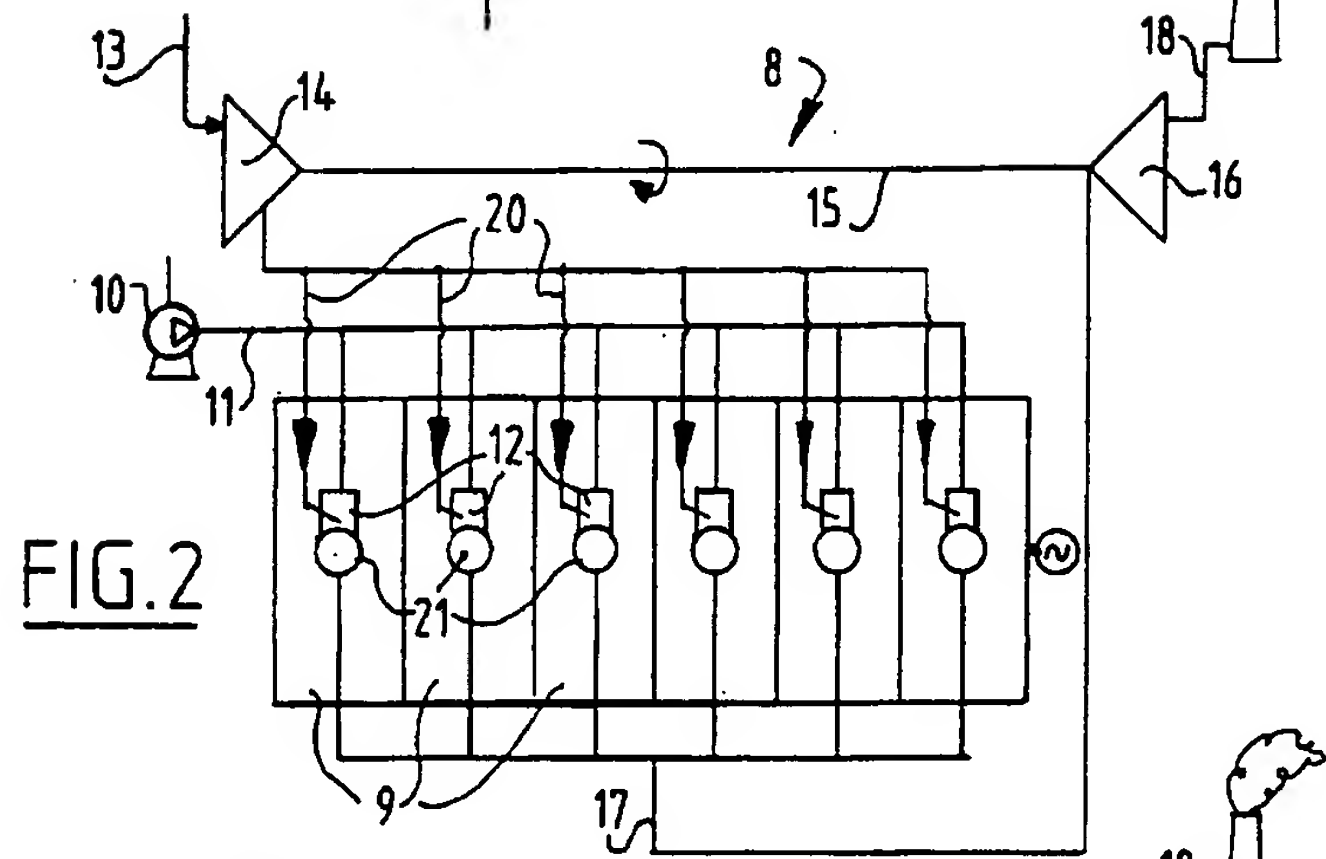
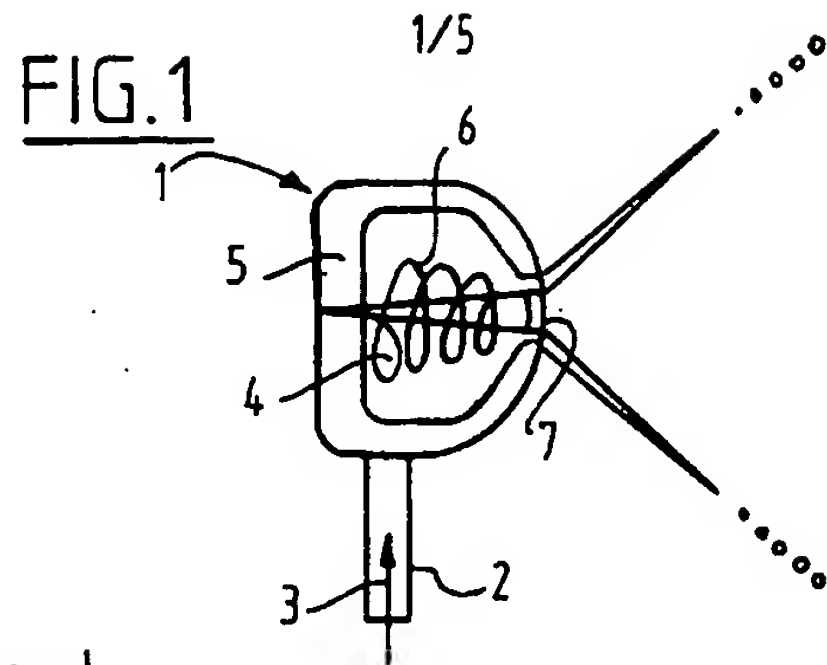
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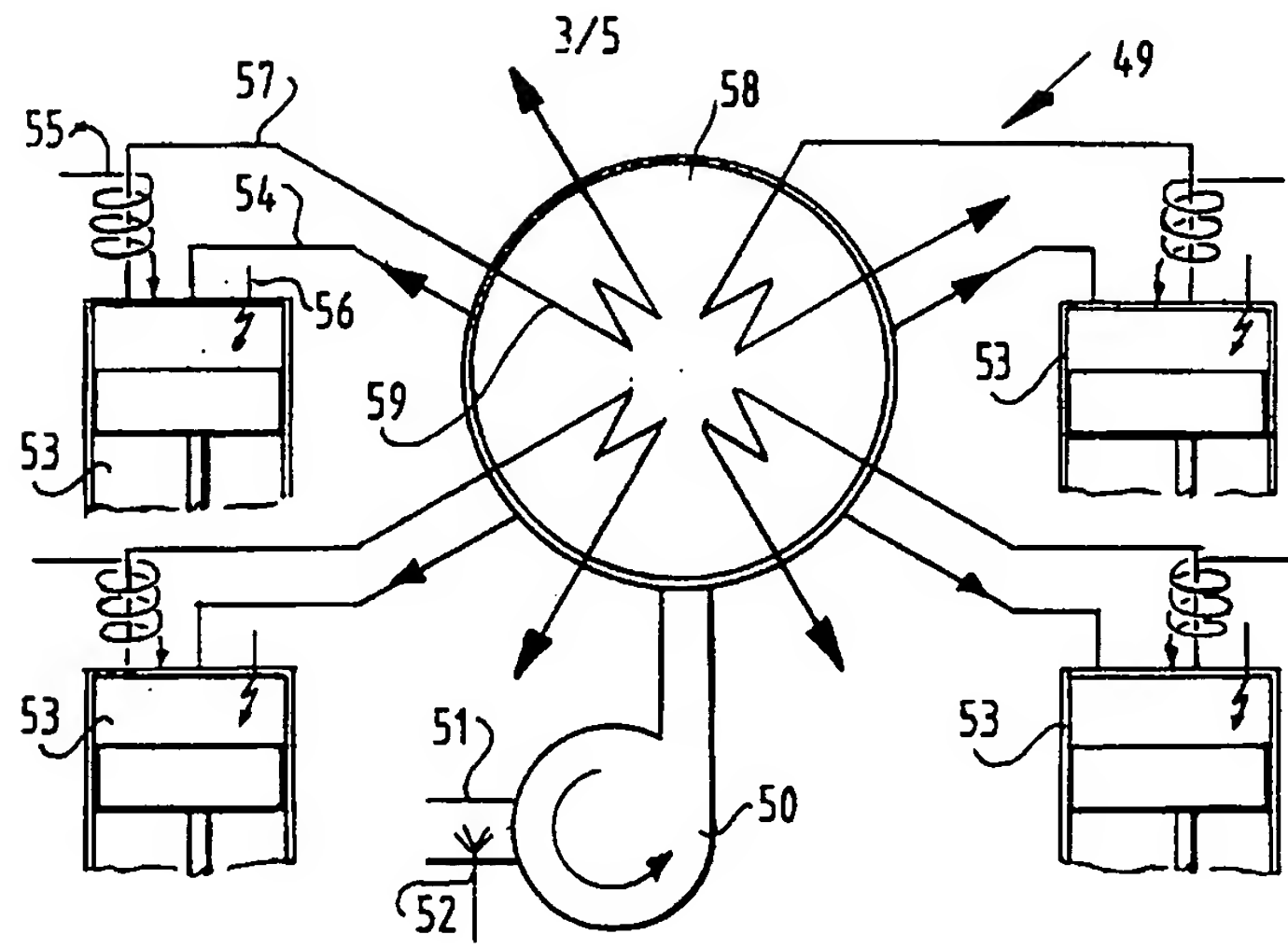


FIG. 5

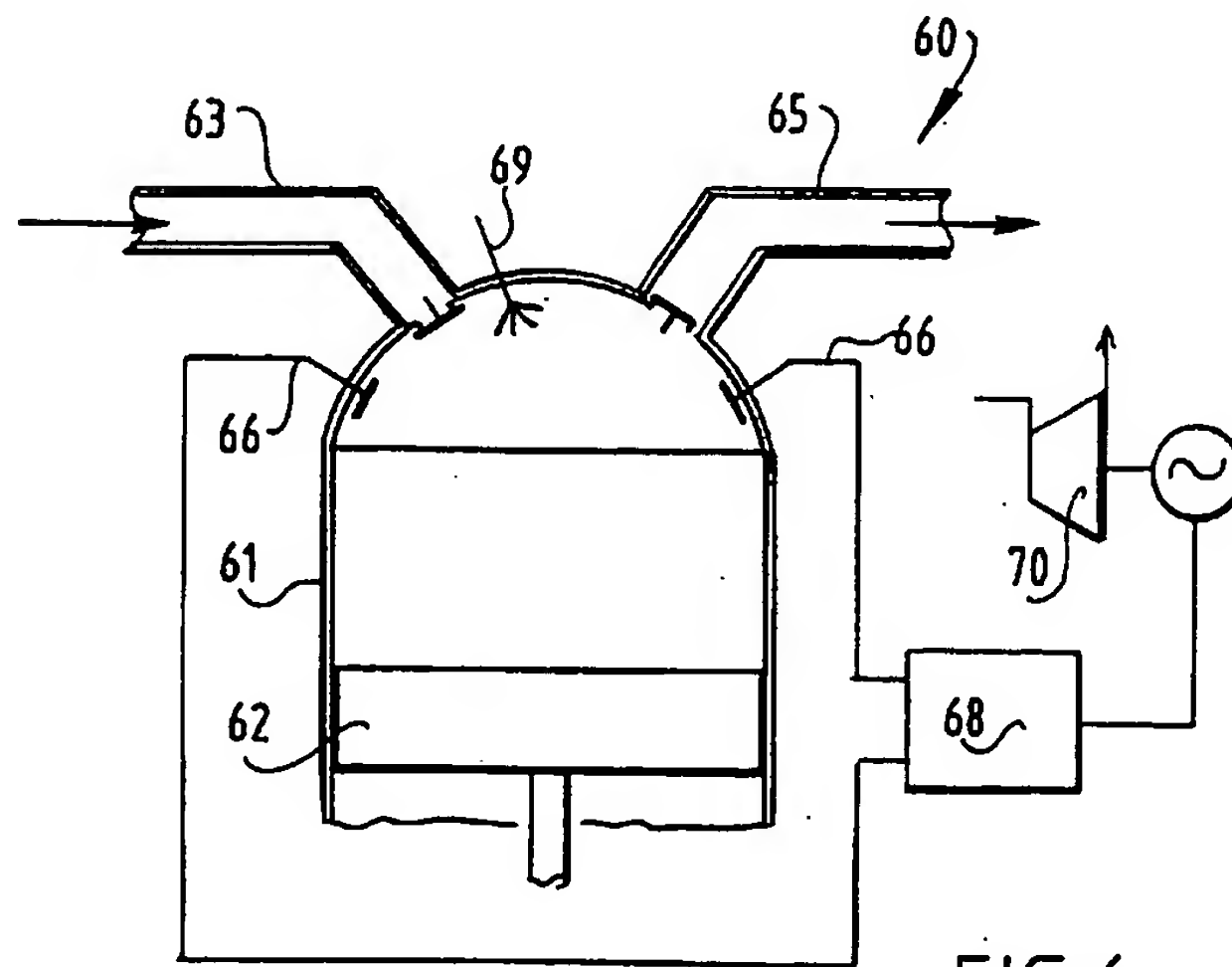


FIG. 6

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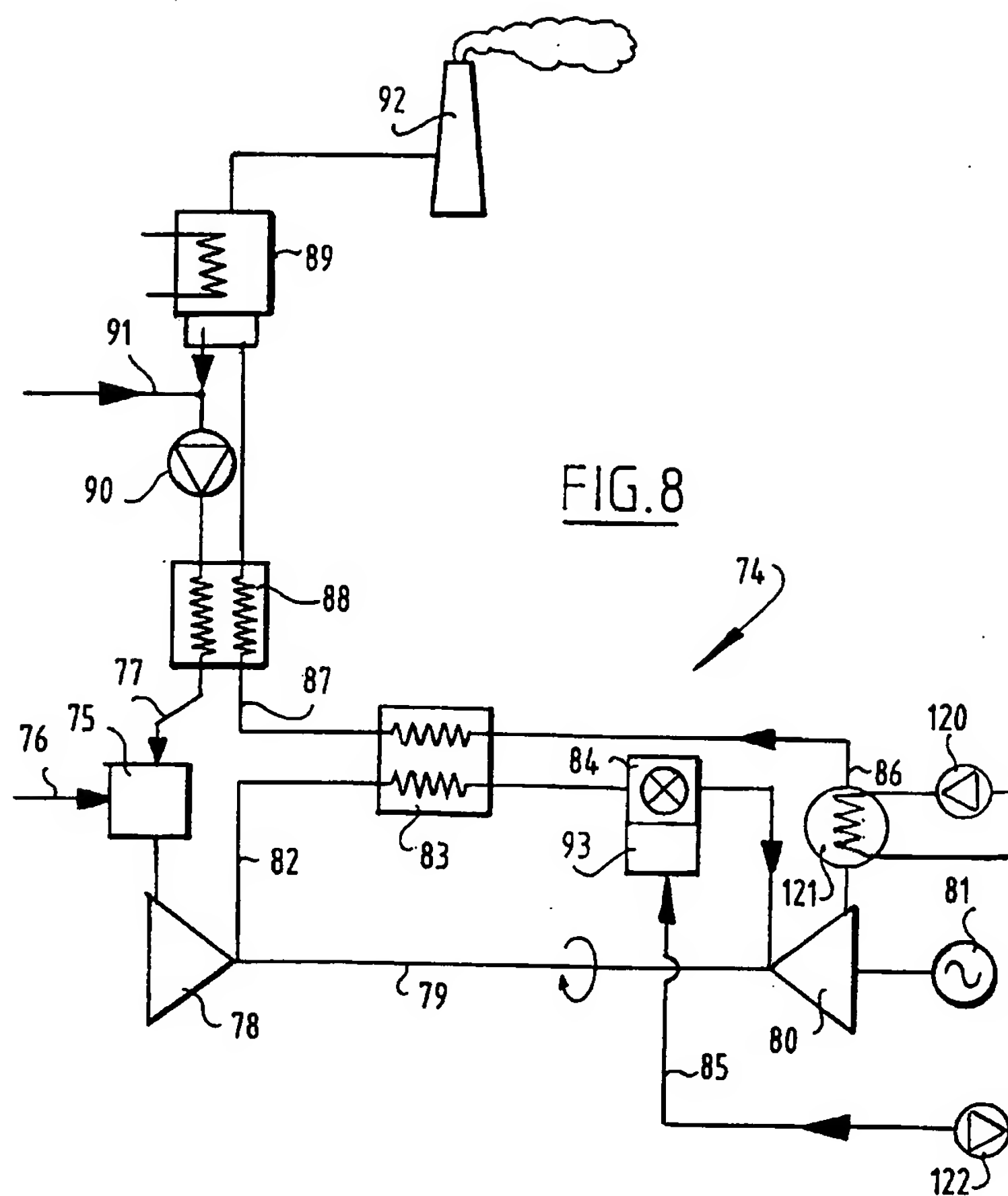
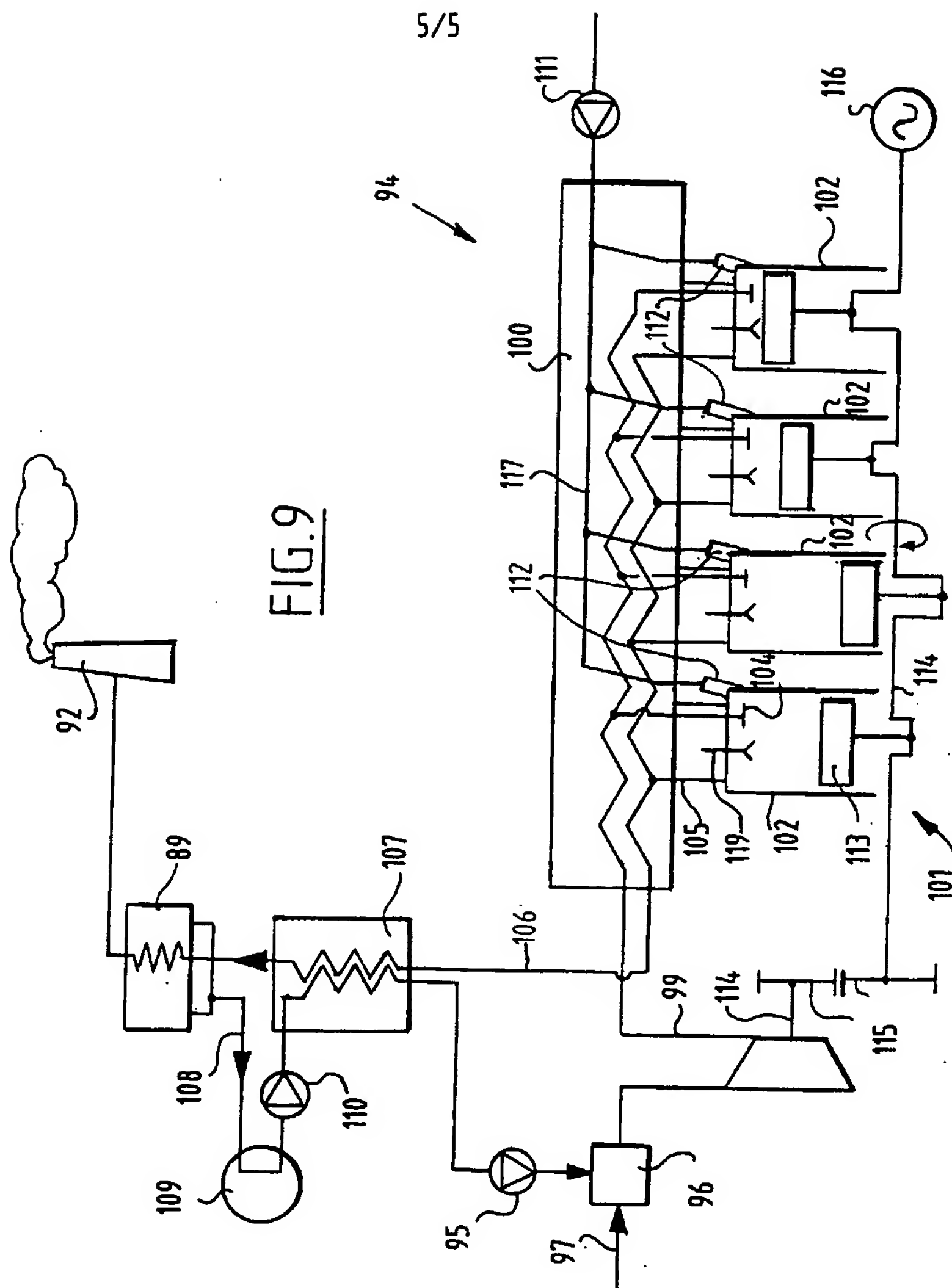


FIG. 9

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No  
PCT/NL 00/00110

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER  
IPC 7 F02B51/00 F02M53/06 F02C7/22

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)  
IPC 7 F02B F02M

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

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Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

27 Apr11 2000

Date of mailing of the international search report

04/05/2000

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PCT/NL 00/00110

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